



Dear State, Tribal, and Local Government Colleague:

As you know, the Northwest faces an enormous and complex challenge to recover the salmon and other endangered aquatic species. In order to reverse the decline of salmon and other aquatic species, we must work towards restoring the water quality of our lakes and rivers, and the critical habitat that these species need for survival.

During the last year, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, have been working together on a number of initiatives to integrate the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The enclosed guidance document entitled "Integrating the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act: Analysis, Commitments and Recommendations for Aligning Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) and Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP)," is one part of our agencies effort to integrate the application of the CWA and ESA.

This guidance is designed to describe the advantages of TMDL/HCP integration and address the need to support private and governmental entities that are wrestling with how to successfully resolve ESA issues in the same geographic area that also contain water bodies listed under section 303(d) of the CWA. It is our intent that this guidance serve as a mechanism, where appropriate, for streamlining and integrating the HCP and TMDL processes. We now need your help in reviewing this draft guidance and identifying how it can be improved. Please feel free to share the draft with others who may have an interest in the topic.

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We look forward to your comments and suggestions.

Sincerely,

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